

Vibrant Vacation



To head off common travel maladies, pack these tried-and-true natural remedies.

Even an idyllic trip can turn sour if you're feeling lousy. To head off common travel maladies, pack these tried-and-true natural remedies.

Many studies show that melatonin—three milligrams taken just before your new bedtime—can help acclimate you to a time zone. “Take a pillow and blanket on the plane and take your melatonin about 20 minutes before you're ready to snuggle in,” says Roger Clemens, who teaches at the University of Southern California School of Pharmacy. This approach will be even more effective if you gradually reset your schedule in the days before your trip by getting up an hour or two earlier (if you're traveling east) or later (if you're traveling west).

To fight the “bad” bacteria that cause travelers' diarrhea, take “good” bugs: probiotics. The bacteria in these dietary supplements help maintain digestive health; one strain that's well documented as staving off travelers' diarrhea is lactobacillus GG. Taking two capsules a day, starting two days before your departure and continuing throughout the trip, can cut the risk of catching a GI bug nearly in half; it can also cut the duration and intensity of symptoms if you fall ill.

If you're susceptible to motion sickness, pack ginger. Several studies have shown that capsules containing the powdered form help. Integrative medicine physician Andrew Weil also recommends taking a few crystallized ginger candies before a boat ride or long car trip.